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BRAHMS' SONATA FOR VIOLONCELLO
AND PIANO IN F MAJOR, OPUS 99

by

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AN ESSAY

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend
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BRAHMS' SONATA FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO IN F MAJOR, OPUS 99,
submitted by Joan Shelley Bosmans in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Music.

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CHAPTER I

ROMANTICISM AND THE MUSIC OF BRAHMS

Music in Nineteenth-Century Germany

Romanticism was manifested in the nineteenth century perhaps as a countermovement to the rationalism of the eighteenth century. It was an international phenomenon, strongest in Germany, influential in England, France and Russia, and evident in Bohemia, Poland, Spain and Italy. Romanticism expressed the fanciful, the emotional, the passionate and the exotic in human nature.

The Romantic literary movement in the arts appeared as early as the second half of the eighteenth century in the writings of such philosophers as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), a novelist gifted in music and musical criticism, as well as a social and educational philosopher who reacted against the intellectual, formalistic tradition, demanding a greater emphasis on man's instincts and feelings than on his intellect. The several arts began to lose their clarity of outline, as one drew inspiration from another. Comments on the position of music may be found among the writers and poets of the day; authors such as E. T. A. Hoffman used musicians as literary figures, and music expressed literary ideas. Many nineteenth-century musicians had interests and capabilities in fields other than music. Many such as Berlioz, Wagner and Schumann were gifted writers and critics.

The Romantic era was an age of much thought and activity, individualism and freedom being the dominating concepts in the struggle between freedom and oppression, science and faith, and capitalism and socialism. The tyranny of Napoleon came and went, Darwin challenged the theory of man's divine origin, and Karl Marx presented socialism in his book, Das Kapital. Freud altered the idea of behavior governed by reason, and scientists developed the telegraph, the electric light and the radio.

In this changing culture, music found a new role. With the decline of the patronage system, music was no longer confined to the aristocracy; it became the property, solace and stimulant of the masses. The new commercial, cultured middle class sought excitement or relaxation in the opera house or concert hall. Music presented more to the listener than it had in earlier times, and in turn the listener demanded more. The greater emphasis on interpretation added an emotional and personal element to music, and with this came the rise of the virtuoso soloist. With the commercial concert appeared the music journalist, whose task it was to explain and interpret the music for the middle-class public.

The Romantic movement was foreshadowed in the later works of Beethoven. By 1800 a new approach was taken to form and style. The line of structural evolution had, by this point in time, passed from Haydn to Beethoven, in whose works it reached a temporary culmination. After Beethoven, the composers of the Romantic period widened the range of emotional expression, and adapted the polyphonic

texture to suit the requirements of the new musical language.

From the standpoint of form, the contributions of the Romantic period included the one-movement character pieces for piano, the art-song for voice and piano, and the symphonic poem for orchestra.

Romantic music gives evidence of a gradual change from the often purely instrumental thematic invention of the Classic era to one more closely allied to the vocal line. The literary orientation of romanticism imbued instrumental music with the characteristic elements of vocal music, which is possibly the most personal form of expression, thus suiting admirably the Romantics' search for individualism.

Other stylistic innovations include increasingly chromatic harmony, predilection for nationalist dance rhythms, wider-spaced scoring, and richer and more varied textures. With the increased chromatic harmony the clear articulation of tonality, one of the basic concepts of Classic style, became veiled, but perhaps more provocative.

In the Classic era, orchestral and chamber music styles each assumed a specific character; thus the symphonic style differed from the string quartet style, and that of the quartet differed from the piano trio. The Romantics resisted this stylistic independence, and chamber music broadened into music for various ensembles. Compositions for string quartet began to show orchestral tendencies.

In German Romantic music a conflict existed - on one side the conservatives represented by Mendelssohn and Schumann looked to the Classicists as the ideal, while on the other side, the extreme romanticism of Liszt and Wagner defied tradition, caring less for beauty of style than for vivid, picturesque expression.

For the Germans, music was always more than a sensuous delight in forms. Music was an expression of intellectual and moral ideas. Composers were consciously or unconsciously imbued with the humanistic ideas of German philosophy, which had transformed religious ideas into moral ideas. This union of music with ideas and with moral sentiments gave the musical life of Germany its seriousness and ponderousness.¹

The conservatives, or old school, left the theatre almost untouched, concentrating on the symphony, quartet and sonata; the new school turned from the sonata to the symphonic poem and the opera.

Into this turmoil of the Romantic age came Johannes Brahms. At the time of his birth in Hamburg on May 7, 1833, Beethoven had been dead for six years and Schubert for five; Mendelssohn was twenty-four, Schumann twenty-three, Liszt twenty-one, and Wagner twenty. By temperament and training, Brahms belonged to the Classical school which stressed firmness of outline, balance of structural form, and clarity of texture. But in his own generation the idiom of music was moving away from these ideals; the curve of

¹Max Graf, Composer and Critic (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1947), p. 266.

melodic phrases was becoming less suitable for polyphonic treatment, and emotional and poetic expression took precedence over clarity and structure.

Brahms the Composer

Brahms fortified and condensed the rhapsodic chamber music style of romanticism, recapturing the spirit and tone of chamber music by fusing and organizing his works into an order that makes him appear, compared to his contemporaries, a classicist.²

Brahms' music is made peculiarly his own through certain stylistic traits which recur again and again in his works. One of the most noticeable of these is thematic metamorphosis, which was mastered by Brahms, and which appears in virtually all his works. Brahms did not ordinarily relate whole themes, but basic motives or germ cells, characteristically reducible to three to five notes. By permutations of the order of the notes along with other variations of the basic motive in his later works, he increased the subtlety of the process. The F major Sonata contains many instances of the economical use of thematic and motivic cells which develop into full-fledged themes.

Much of Brahms' music exhibits the simplicity of melodic structure that is characteristic of folk music. William Henry Hadow cites two types of melodic curve: a progression of consecutive notes

²Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton and Co. Inc., 1941), pp. 902-3.



rising and falling, and a chord in arpeggio.³ Memorable themes usually contain both of these components, often with an emphasis on the first one; Brahms' music is an exception as in a large number of his themes the arpeggio predominates. Long lyrical melodies were typical in Brahms' earlier works (before Opus 40). After 1865 a new type of melody appeared which begins lyrically but after a few measures is dissolved in contrapuntal or rhythmic treatment.⁴ One example of this type is the opening theme of the last movement of the F major Sonata.

Brahms tended to use unusual rhythms, especially those which are variations on the normal triple time. Cross-rhythms appear frequently, especially triplets against duplets. Brahms was "fond of placing the melody so that the stress falls outside of the principal accent of the bar; thus baffling the hearer who feels that rhythm and tempo are really the same, but is yet conscious that for a moment they don't coincide."⁵

"In the music of Brahms there is nothing superficial, nothing gaudy, no sentimentality, and no clearly-defined national characteristics to narrow its appeal."⁶

³William Henry Hadow, Studies in Modern Music (12th ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926), p. 299.

⁴Homer Ulrich, Chamber Music (2nd ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 316.

⁵Hadow, p. 300.

⁶Jeffrey Pulver, Johannes Brahms (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1926), p. 313.

Chamber Music

As a composer Brahms worked outward from his own instrument, the piano, to combinations of it with other instruments, and then to the string quartet, probably stimulated by the growth of professional string quartets. He attempted the form of the duo for piano and a stringed instrument only after he had mastered the larger ensembles of trios, quartets, and quintets. In chamber music works with piano, Beethoven was one of the first to make use of dialogue between the instruments; Brahms made this relationship more intense and dramatic, and greatly enriched the role of the piano. Brahms' chamber music comprises twenty-four works.

Brahms' compositions for cello date from an age of increased interest in cello technique and exploration of its possibilities. Preceding the two cello sonatas by Brahms are found the five cello sonatas by Beethoven, all prior to 1815; two sonatas by Mendelssohn, the first in B-flat written in 1839, the second in D major in 1843; the Variations Concertante in D major (1832) also by Mendelssohn; Chopin's Cello Sonata in G minor, Opus 65, the last composition to be published during his lifetime, and also his Grand Duo in E major for cello and piano (1832). Schumann's Cello Concerto, Opus 129 (1850) was written at Düsseldorf, where contact with an orchestra containing some fine players attracted Schumann's attention to the possibilities of writing for stringed instruments. And just as Chopin had the assistance of the cellist, Auguste Franchomme,⁷ so Brahms had the advice of Joachim's quartet, and

⁷John Alexander Fuller-Maitland, Brahms (London: Methuen, 1911), p. 59.

especially of Robert Hausmann, the cellist of the group.

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SONATA IN F MAJOR, OPUS 99

Introduction

Brahms' first work for cello and piano was the E Minor Sonata, Opus 38, which was begun in 1862 and completed in 1865, preceding the composition of the later F Major Sonata by twenty-one years. In the interval separating the two works Brahms wrote for the cello, in combination with other instruments, three string quartets, a string quintet, a piano quartet and a piano trio.

Brahms' biographer, Max Kalbeck, relates that Brahms promised a piece for cello to Robert Hausmann.¹ Hearing the E Minor Sonata performed by Hausmann in 1885, Brahms recalled his promise, and the result was the F Major Sonata, duly dedicated to Hausmann. It was written during a summer holiday at the lake of Thun, Switzerland, in the year 1886, being introduced at the same time as the A Major Violin Sonata and the C Minor Trio for piano and strings. All three compositions were played by the composer and his friends soon after their completion at private gatherings in Bern. The first public performances of each were given in Vienna; the F Major Sonata was performed by Brahms and Hausmann at Hausmann's concert on November 24, 1886.

¹Johannes Brahms (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1904-14), Vol. II, pp. 191-2.

First Movement - Allegro Vivace

The first movement is energetic and forceful. For the first eight measures, the piano provides a background of tremolo chords. The tension of the abrupt cello utterances, with the combined forces of sforzandos and tremolandos produces an opening which verges on the melodramatic. The first subject, which is introduced by the cello in the first measure, is characteristic of Brahms' partiality to triadic themes. The interval of the fourth does not escape notice since it appears frequently in much of Brahms' music. Donald Francis Tovey remarks that "the broken rhythm of the main theme and the ways in which it is transformed into sustained figures in the course of development constitute a notable addition to the resources of sonata style."²

The initial leaps in the cello line are, in relation to the first subject, preliminary, or at least incomplete. In measures 9 to 12 the piano opposes the cello line with a countersubject of its own: a downward progression of six quarter-notes, announced first in the right hand (9-19) and then passed to the left hand (11-12).

The true theme of the sonata is thus neither a melody with accompaniment, as in the first (E minor) sonata, nor even either one of these two energetic themes by itself; it is the two in their opposition and mutual completion - a bit of rugged two-part counterpoint in which the explosive energy of the oddly rhythmmed leaps is

²Essays and Lectures on Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 260.

controlled by the dogged energy of the even quarters.³

The series of quarter-notes begins on the tonic (F) and reaches the dominant (C), thus establishing the theme firmly in the central key. The tension subsides on the last phrase of this opening section and is followed by a transition to the second subject. This bridge passage (26-32) has been cited by Edwin Evans as somewhat incongruous and gloomy and as a blemish to the first movement in that it disturbs the symmetry of the divisions without adding anything of interest. "But lack of obvious melody is far from being a reproach, as the distressful feeling expressed would have been inconsistent with mere tunefulness."⁴

The second subject, in C major, begun by the piano alone in measure 33, is said by one commentator to be "architecturally imposing, but its relation to the first subject seems . . . one of position rather than of cognate sense."⁵ At its outset here, and at the cello entry in measure 39, the second subject relieves the troubled character of the first theme, but it soon moves into minor keys and reverts to the sterner character of the first subject, bringing back the quarter-notes of the former

³Daniel Gregory Mason, The Chamber Music of Brahms (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 161.

⁴Handbook to the Chamber and Orchestral Music of Johannes Brahms (London: New Temple Press, 1912), Vol. 11, p. 176.

⁵Donald N. Ferguson, Image and Structure in Chamber Music (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964), p. 182.

motive. The first instance of this is in measures 46 and 47 - the quarters appear in the cello line in a broken accompaniment figure. Their next appearance is in the piano in measure 52, this time inverted and commencing on the third step of A minor instead of the tonic as before. The rhythm is so altered by the repetition of the first, third and fifth notes that the figure covers three measures instead of two. However at its next occurrence in measure 58, also in the piano part, the regular quarter-note motion returns. The exposition closes with a two-string passage in the cello (60-65), the cello now providing the tremolando background with the quarter-note theme and the piano echoing the cello's initial motive in octave leaps.

The development begins in the key of F-sharp minor (67), foreshadowing the key of the slow movement to follow. It commences with a tremolando that is even more dramatic than at the beginning. In this section, the two halves of the theme are combined in a new way: successively rather than simultaneously. The cello has the first motive in measures 67 and 68, and the piano follows in measures 69 and 70 with the ascending quarter-note motive. The pattern is repeated in measures 71 to 74. In the succeeding chromatic episode using the rising figure, the initial energy of the movement subsides. The rising figure has changed its character through diminution from quarters to eighths (75-76). Following two measures of cello tremolo (93-94) the first motive resumes priority in the piano part. The rhythmic momentum is lessened; the leaps are in quarter-notes and

half-notes and are begun on the first beat instead of on the sixteenth-note up-beat. The passage modulates downward over a chromatically descending bass. This bass line, 95-101, may have been derived from the quarter-note motive, although once again rhythmically augmented. An augmentation of the first subject appears at measure 113, each note a full measure long.

In measures 121 and 122 the left hand of the piano part plays three notes of the quarter-note motive pointing to F major; the right hand takes this up (122-123), followed by the cello (123-124). Finally the whole motive appears in the piano (125-126) signalling the return of the main theme and beginning of the recapitulation. The recapitulation consists of a repetition of the exposition with minor adjustments. The double-stop passage for the cello (137-140) gives greater emphasis and resonance to the first theme at that point.

The two principal themes appear in the coda, which begins in measure 178. The leaps achieve rhythmic stability and tonal repose in the piano (204-206), and the scale suggested by the quarter-note figure appears in a completed form - begun by the cello in the string-crossing passage (204-205) and finished by the piano (206-209). The drama and energy of the movement is restored in the final five measures, marked Vivace.

ANALYTICAL CHART - FIRST MOVEMENT

FORM	Sonata
EXPOSITION	measures 1-66 F major, C major

Measures

1-16	First Subject F major
1-8	Theme "A" (cello) F major
9-12	Theme "B" (piano) F major (chromatic)
13-16	extension of Theme "B"
17-25	First Intermediate Motive (cello)
26-33	Transition F major - C major
33-47	Second Subject C major
33-39	piano
39-47	cello
48-66	Codetta
48-51	figuration derived rhythmically from Theme "B" of the First Subject
51-60	related to Theme "A"
60-66	tremolando figure based on Theme "B" of the First Subject
	DEVELOPMENT 67-128 F-sharp major, F major
67-75	free development of First Subject
	Theme "A" cello
	Theme "B" piano
76-94	Second Intermediate Motive, derived from Theme "B" of the First Subject

95-118	free development of the First Subject
119-128	Bridge
RECAPITULATION 129-178 F major	
129-140	First Subject, Theme "A" (cello) F major
141-145	First Intermediate Motive (cello)
145-159	Second Subject F major
	145-151 piano
	151-159 cello
160-178	Codetta
CODA 178-212 F major	
179-194	derived from the First Subject
194-203	derived from the Second Subject
203-212	extended cadence

Second Movement - Adagio Affettuoso

Within the E Minor Cello Sonata Brahms had originally included a slow movement between the first and second movements, but upon receiving Clara Schumann's comment that the sonata was already "too full of music,"⁶ he abandoned the idea. Repeated entreaties on the part of Gänsbacher, to whom the sonata was dedicated, to see the ill-fated slow movement were to no avail. It is a possibility that the Adagio Affettuoso of the F Major Sonata is in fact that discarded movement, arguments for this opinion being the key choice of the raised tonic, an unlikely key in relation to F major, and brief melodic similarities between the main themes of this movement and those of the first movement of the E Minor Sonata.⁷ The theory has not been proved, and remains a matter for conjecture.

The key choice of F-sharp for the slow movement was the cause of an outburst of criticism when the sonata first appeared. Removed by only a semitone from the principal tonality, it was thought to be too near in pitch, too remote in key signature, and undermining to the harmonic unity of the whole composition by a contrast of color which was too extreme.

⁶Quoted by Max Kalbeck, Johannes Brahms (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1904-14), Vol. II, p. 191.

⁷William S. Newman, The Sonata Since Beethoven (U.S.A.: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 342.

The strange effect of the leading-note of the new movement being identical with the keynote of that which had gone before is a little perplexing to the hearer, and its excuse is that the theme of the second movement seems to require a feeling of ambiguity.⁸

It may be pointed out that this was not Brahms' first use of unusual key relationships, and that it is not unprecedented in music composition. Three earlier uses of distant key relationships as cited by Walter Willson Cobbett are:

C.P.E. Bach - Symphony in D major (short middle movement in E Flat)

Haydn - last Piano Sonata in E flat (slow movement in E)

Beethoven - C# minor Quartet, Opus 131 (second movement in D)⁹

Brahms achieves in the F Major Sonata an organic diversity in his choice of keys, as he considers not just the separate movement as a unit, but the entire series of movements, and selects keys for the second and third movements with the same care used in determining the keys of the second subject and development sections. Although F (major and minor respectively) is resumed for the last two movements of the sonata, the F-sharp tonality occurs in each section of the third movement as well as in the last movement, and the semitone

⁸ John Alexander Fuller-Maitland, Masters of German Music (London: Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., 1894), pp. 57-8.

⁹ Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), Vol. I, p. 178.

fall (F-sharp major, F minor) in the slow movement parallels the semitone rise in the opening Allegro. From this it may be concluded that F-sharp was not a whimsical choice of key for the Adagio, but a choice made with a view to the over-all tonal design of the sonata.

The second movement is in a simple sonata form. The slow, tense first subject appears first in the piano, to be taken over by the cello in the second phrase (measure 5), which is extended to a length of seven measures. At this point, the piano takes up the pizzicato figure of the cello. The melodic structure of the movement shows, as does much of Brahms' writing, the free and expressive use of a motive. In this case, the motive is seemingly inconsequential - three sixteenth-notes leading to an eighth - and is derived ultimately from the opening notes of the cello, played pizzicato, in measure 2. This brief motive is echoed immediately in the piano (2-3), and returns in the cello line (3-4). Following the second measure of the second phrase (6), the texture becomes freely imitative, with the sixteenth-note figure expanded to six notes in measure 9, and these six in the succeeding two measures augmented into notes twice as long, thus creating a certain intensity by repetition, and giving a special emphasis to the approaching cadence in measure 12. In measures 12 to 18 the motive appears in diminution as triplet sixteenth-notes, followed by its familiar appearance as sixteenths (three, four or two) preceding an eighth-note.

The episode in the F minor section, beginning at measure 20, bears an affinity with the first subject through the use of the

thirty-second-note in measure 20, relating to the similar figure in the piano in measure 1. The sixteenth-note rhythm is maintained, although the piano plays a thirty-second-note variant of the theme in measures 24 to 28. The theme is repeated by piano and cello, beginning in canon at measure 28. Despite the possible relationship of this theme to the first subject, the effect is one of an episode between the two statements of the first and second subjects of sonata form, and not one of development or expansion of the first subject.

In measures 40 to 43, the sixteenth-note pizzicato motive appears in different registers, while the piano plays the opening measures of the first subject. The first subject returns at measure 44, the accompaniment in the remainder of the movement being rather more elaborate than that of the opening statement. The second subject returns in measure 56, elaborated in both instruments.

The coda, comprised of the last nine measures, refers to the previous themes. The piano once again has the first subject (63ff), while the accompanying cello pizzicato is more agitated in rhythm. The theme of the episode in the piano (64-65) is answered by the cello (65-66), and the movement closes with the motivic sixteenth-note figure referred to above, over an extended dominant pedal.

ANALYTICAL CHART - SECOND MOVEMENT

FORM Sonata

EXPOSITION 1-19 F-sharp major, C-sharp major

Measures

1-11	First subject F-sharp major
	1-4 piano
	5-11 cello
12-19	Second Subject (cello); F-sharp major, C-sharp major
	DEVELOPMENT (episodical) 20-43 F-minor, F-sharp major
20-27	Episode
	20-24 cello
	24-27 piano (varied)
28-34	repetition and extension of Episode
35-43	Transition based on First Subject
	RECAPITULATION 44-62 F-sharp major, D major, F-sharp major
44-55	First Subject F-sharp major
	44-47 piano
	48-55 cello
56-62	Second Subject (cello) D-major, F-sharp major
	CODA 63-71 F-sharp major
63-64	reference to First Subject (piano)
64-71	reference to Episode (piano and cello)

Third Movement - Allegro Passionato

The third movement is in ternary form. -It reflects the energy of the first movement. At the opening, while the piano has the theme, the cello pivots around the dominant, C. The mood of the first section is grim, intensified by its subdued expression. Following measure 11, the theme is treated motivically by the cello with cross-rhythms in the piano, resulting in a rather heavily-punctuated expression of the theme. The complete theme reappears in the piano (33-36), while the cello again hovers around C. The theme is finally presented in a complete form by the cello (51ff) in the key of E minor. The passage following measure 59 leads to a violent outburst in F minor (67ff). Perpetual eighth-note motion, freedom of transient modulation, and cross-rhythms within the measure appear throughout the movement and heighten the excitement.

The second section is in two parts, each of which is repeated. The rhythmic stability of dotted-quarter-note motion and the change of mood provide contrast to the turmoil of the previous section. The principal theme (130-144) is extended in the second half of the section before its restatement in measure 180. The second phrase of the theme begins in measure 188 over a tonic pedal instead of the dominant pedal as in its first presentation. The four-measure bridge to the repetition of the first section once again employs augmented note values to slow the pace.

ANALYTICAL CHART - THIRD MOVEMENT

FORM Ternary A B A

Measures

FIRST SECTION 1 - 125

- 1- 10 First Theme (piano) F minor
- 11- 24 Intermediate Motive C-minor, E-flat major
- 25- 32 Bridge C minor
- 33- 36 First Theme F minor
- 37- 50 Intermediate Motive modulating to E minor
- 51- 55 First Theme (cello) E-minor with chromaticism
- 56- 70 Extension of First Theme, F-minor is resumed at measure 67
- 71- 84 Intermediate Motive and extension (cello)
- 85- 94 First Theme and extension F-minor
- 95-108 Intermediate Motive and extension (piano and cello) F-minor
- 109-125 Coda

SECOND SECTION (a:|| ba:|| coda) 126-195 F major

- 126-129 Link (piano)
- 130-144 Second Theme, two eight-measure phrases, repeated, F major
- 145-179 Digression: Second Theme extended and modified; D-flat major, C-sharp major, F major
- 180-191 Second Theme
- 192-195 Bridge to repetition of First Section

FIRST SECTION - repeated da capo

Fourth Movement - Allegro Molto

The finale, in sonata-rondo form, is based on a theme of folk-like character. It is exuberant, but in a manner far removed from the drama and vitality of the previous movements. Frau von Herzogenberg wrote to Brahms upon first reading the work:

Ich hatte das Gefühl, als stäche er in der Stimmung allzusehr ab von dem grossen Stile der anderen Sätze. (I had the feeling that the mood of this movement contrasted too violently with the grand style of the others.)¹⁰

Donald Francis Tovey writes that although completeness of form and climax are disguised by extreme terseness, the effect produced is one of noblest proportions and final emotional aptness.¹¹ He further states that "the rondo which ends the sonata with the smallest and most childlike of Brahms' finales is one of those cases where the small finale has the effect of an epilogue to the previous movement."¹²

Evans cites one feature which keeps this movement in character with the rest of the sonata, this being the semitonic rise (measure 57) which through its frequent use throughout the sonata tends to unify the work.¹³ Also it appears that there is

¹⁰Letter of December 2, 1886, quoted by Edwin Evans, Handbook to the Chamber and Orchestral Music of Johannes Brahms (London: New Temple Press, 1933), p. 183.

¹¹Donald Francis Tovey, Essays and Lectures on Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 252.

¹²Tovey, Op. Cit., p. 262

¹³Edwin Evans, Handbook to the Chamber and Orchestral Music of Johannes Brahms (London: New Temple Press, 1933), pp. 182-183.

a linear similarity between the subject as it appears in measures 1 and 2, and the second theme (129-132) in the previous movement. The descent A-G-F and subsequent rise to B flat is peculiar to both cases.

The first subject appears in measures 1 to 9 in the cello, and is then taken up by the piano, measures 9 to 16, accompanied by a triplet figuration on the cello. Its extension in the piano part (17-22) constitutes the transition to the second subject which appears first in the piano (23-28) and then in the cello (29-33). The character of the second subject is in contrast to that of the first subject in that it is more vigorous than the gently-flowing first subject. The extension of this theme by means of triplet figuration (33-44) leads to the return of the first subject. The first subject reappears in the cello in measure 45 accompanied by the triplet figuration in the right hand of the piano, the left hand recalling the rhythmic figure of the opening measures. A three-measure transition (54-56) leads to the episode in B-flat minor (57-84) played by the cello. The theme of the episode bears a similarity in melodic outline to the first subject, although it is of a more intense character. Daniel Gregory Mason states that it is recognizable as the first subject, changed first of all from major to minor, and its rhythm reduced from quadruple to triple division of the beat.¹⁴ The transition (80-84) is an extended

¹⁴The Chamber Music of Brahms (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 168.

version of the transition which led into this episode (54-56). In the recapitulation, beginning in measure 84, the piano presents an extended version of the first subject modulating from G-flat major to the original key of F major. The link to the second subject is again present, somewhat extended. The second subject follows, first in the piano (102ff) and then in the cello (108ff), and is extended through motivic use of the triplet figuration leading to the coda (129-144), which is based on the first subject. This final appearance of the first subject makes use of a new rhythmic figure, pizzicato, in the cello. As in the case of the first movement the tempo is broadened through the use of augmentation and retardation, followed immediately by a brief return to the quicker tempo and a decisive cadence.

ANALYTICAL CHART - FOURTH MOVEMENT

FORM Sonata-rondo

Measures

EXPOSITION 1-56

- 1- 22 First Subject F major
- 1-9 cello
- 9-16 piano
- 17-22 link
- 23- 44 Second Subject tonal centre: dominant
- 23-28 piano
- 29-33 cello
- 33-44 extension of Second Subject
- 44- 53 First Subject (cello) F major
- 54- 56 Transition based on rhythmic figure of the accompaniment

DEVELOPMENT 57-84

- 57- 79 Episode (cello) D-flat minor
- 80- 84 Transition based on previous transition (54-56)

RECAPITULATION 84-128

- 84-102 First Subject (piano) G-flat major - F major
- 84- 96 piano
- 96-102 link
- 102-113 Second Subject extended, tonal centre: tonic
- 102-108 piano
- 108-113 cello

- 113-128 Transition

CODA

- 129-144 First Subject (cello)

CHAPTER III

SOME ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE

The F major Sonata, as well as all of Brahms' music, demands of the cellist good projection of tone. Because of the orchestral nature of Brahms' piano writing, the need in performance is to achieve a satisfactory balance between the cello and the piano. In seeking such a balance, it is necessary for the pianist to use the damper pedal with care, and for both players to observe dynamic markings carefully.

Regarding tempo, it is advisable to overcome a tendency to play the work too quickly. Too fast a tempo puts the cellist at a disadvantage, giving him time neither to make the long notes sing, nor to articulate the shorter notes effectively. The complexity of detail in Brahms' music demands that it be played with deliberation. Daniel Mason presents the question of uniformity of pace as a means of unification in a sonata movement. Since Brahms' music is so organically structured - often with the second theme developing from the first, rather than merely following it - the tempos must all be considered in relation to each other, and must cohere to preserve continuity. Thus the tendency to hurry loud passages and drag soft ones is to be avoided.¹

¹The Chamber Music of Brahms (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 204.

In the first movement, strict observance of dynamic markings, notably the markings of accentuation, and the crescendos and diminuendos which to a great extent shape the phrases, is essential. It may be difficult for the cellist to achieve a feeling of continuity in this movement, owing to the fragmentary nature of the melodic line and the use of the extremes of the cello's range in quick succession. A tendency to play each fragment of the line as a separate unit should be avoided. The phrases are motivic, and in fact the cellist does not complete a statement until measures 39 to 45 are reached. It is necessary to have a clear overview of a complete section. The phrases must be seen in their ultimate relationship to the total structure. A slightly disjointed feeling which may result from the lack of continuous playing can be alleviated somewhat by playing each note to its full value. This is of utmost importance in the treatment of the sixteenth-note which begins each of the cello's first utterances in the opening fourteen measures. The first leap uses the interval of the rising fourth, much favored by Brahms, and it requires deliberate playing. Attack and length of notes should be carefully matched in each of the opening figures, and special care taken with those involving string-crossing. A further consideration in this movement is the constant change in function of the cello from solo to accompaniment. A technical problem, largely one of fingering, exists in measures 17 to 20, where in the brief space of four measures the line rises in a broken-chord pattern the distance of two and one-half octaves.

Although solutions to fingering problems depend to a great extent on the ability and individual preference of the cellist, the solution given in Examples I, II and III may be helpful.

Example I - measures 17 - 23.

Example II - measures 42-45.

Example III - measures 52 - 55

Measures 60-65, 93-118, 173-178 and 204-207 contain a measured tremolo lying between two strings. Tovey has this to say regarding the performance of these measures:

The cellist should keep the bow evenly on the two strings involved, with a movement hardly distinguishable from a sustained double note; and the pianist should observe that Brahms follows Beethoven (in the D major trio) in regarding the best tremolo as not indefinitely fast but consisting of an exact even number of notes. The marks of damping down the sound (sf-p; $f \rightarrow mp$, etc.) should be carefully acted upon.²

In order to sustain the measured tremolo, it is to the cellist's advantage to keep the right arm and the muscles of the shoulder relaxed.

The slow movement demands expressive cantabile playing. The cello entry, begun as a pizzicato bass line, is the motivic source for many of the subsequent phrases. Its enunciation must be resonant and intense, as it must support the chords of the piano part. For the statement of the first subject the cellist should have a mental grasp of the intensity and direction of the line. Control of the technical aspect of playing is necessary in order to sustain the tone throughout the long phrases. The speed of the bow should be constant, and the bowings chosen with this goal in mind. The most problematic passage in bowing is the first statement of the theme, measures 5 to 11. A solution is given in Example IV.

²Essays and Lectures on Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 260.

Example IV - measures 5 - 11.

The cello pizzicato . . . is worked to a tremendous climax when the strain is brought back after the dark remote depths of the F minor middle episode. Hausmann, with Brahms' approval, made a great accelerando at this crescendo, thus providing a natural means of carrying the resonance of the pizzicato over the notes before they dry up.³

By "this crescendo", it must be assumed that Tovey was referring to the one in measures 38 and 39 which immediately precedes the climactic point in measure 40, and it would seem effective for the accelerando to give way gradually through the diminuendo in measures 42 and 43, reaching the original tempo and reflective mood in

³Tovey, p. 261.

measure 44. However, it would seem difficult and unlikely that the cellist could effect an accelerando at this point because of his sustained notes against the greater rhythmic activity of the piano part. One might also question the musicality of a change in tempo at measure 40. Could Tovey have meant to refer to a similar, but more likely passage, measures 63 to 66? Even in this passage an accelerando might be inappropriate because of the increased excitement of the florid note-patterns provided by the composer in measures 64 to 65. The need for sustained tone is perhaps the most important technical consideration in this movement for the cellist.

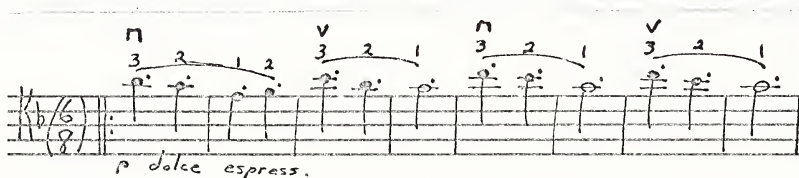
Tovey has this to say of the third movement: "The opening pianoforte theme should not be conceived as a brilliant tour de force. Other contrasted themes must press forward, but as a whole the movement is not to be hustled."⁴ And of the B major passage seventeen measures after the double bar: "The pianist must realize that the light figures are no mere accompaniment but are outlining the continuation of the melody."⁵ The cellist's challenge is to sustain the clearest articulation throughout the first section of this movement. Once again, the accents and dynamic indications must be strictly observed. Effective contrasts may be made by using an off-the-string bowing technique for the notes marked staccato,

⁴Tovey, p. 262.

⁵Ibid.

and adopting a heavier, more insistent, although still detached, style for those notes in similar patterns which are not so indicated (as in the opening phrase, measures 5-10). Vitality and driving energy in the playing are essential to the nature of this movement. The clearest articulation can be made using the bow close to the heel, and in order to avoid crushing the sound, the cellist should again maintain a relaxed bow arm, and while avoiding localized control of the bow by the hand and fingers, motivate the movement from the upper arm. Ill-chosen bowings on the cellist's part may hamper the easy flow of the long phrases, especially in the opening eight measures of the first half of the second section, and its counterparts in the second half (145-148, 180-187). Rather than over-phrasing with too many bow changes, it might be preferable to group two measures to the bow in these instances, as in Example V.

Example V - measures 129-136.



Of the last movement Tovey says: "Brahms liked a lively tempo for it".⁶ The mezza voce opening again gives the cellist the

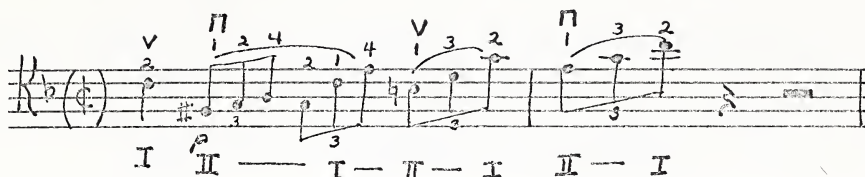
⁶ Ibid.

opportunity of allowing the phrase to speak, or rather to sing, for itself rather than impeding its progress with too frequent change of bow. The opening two measures sound well when played with one bow to the measure, the anacrusis to each measure being slurred over the bar-line, and the succeeding measures (to measure 8) with two bows to the measure. Example VI gives one solution for the bowing and fingering of the opening statement.

Example VI - measure 1 - 10.

The arpeggio filigree with which the cello accompanies the piano (9-15 and later) should be lightly treated and subdued, even at the point of most technical difficulty, measures 33 and 34. The figuration in measures 9 to 15 may be effectively played in the upper half of the bow. Little bow is needed, but each note requires an equal share of the amount used. Example VII provides a possible fingering for measures 33 and 34.

Example VII -- measures 33 - 34.



An intense sound, dependent upon speed and placement of the bow, is effective throughout the B-flat minor episode, measures 57 to 79. The cellist is given a choice in the performance of measures 128 to 134. This passage is marked in two ways: "pizzicato," which seems to be the traditional choice, and "ad lib. col arco pp e staccato." The pizzicato version offers opportunity for an interesting combination of right- and left-hand pizzicato technique. The right hand plucks the note which occurs on the beat, leaving the left hand responsible for the additional off-beat eighth-note when it occurs. A possible method of plucking every note is less effective from the point of view of maintaining absolutely correct rhythm: the result tends to be somewhat awkward and disruptive. The ritard indicated in measures 137 and 138 should be observed as far as the first beat of measure 139, and the ensuing Vivace tempo maintained without relaxation to the end of the movement, allowing of course, for placement of the final chord.

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